Fall from Height

What is the hazard?
Employees who are conducting work at heights, on ladders, rooftops, scaffolding, loading docks, mezzanines, etc., are at risk of falling. Workers at ground level or on flat, stable floors or rooftops are also at risk if there are holes or openings into or through which they can fall, including soil excavations, skylights, and trap doors. There is a high risk of fatality and serious injury, even with falls from relatively low heights. Fifty percent of workers who fall from 11 feet or less are killed by the fall. Fall from height consistently ranks among the top causes of worker fatalities.

Level of Employee Exposure

Do you have employees exposed to this hazard?
Any employee working at height, or passing through an area where there is a potential fall from height.
Examples: Construction and maintenance personnel, painters, window washers, loading dock, stock, and warehouse staff, corrections officers, and elevator and amusements inspectors.

Employees who are not directly involved in construction activities, but who work in or are passing through areas of construction or renovation can be at risk from falls if openings and edges are not adequately guarded, blocked, or marked.

YES / NO

If you answered NO, you never have any employees exposed to this hazard, you have completed this hazard assessment tool.

If you answered YES, please complete the table below and continue on with the remainder of this hazard assessment tool.

List the tasks that expose your employees to this hazard.
Estimate the number of employees conducting each task, and the estimated frequency that each task is conducted (first per employee and then for the agency overall (e.g., how many times per day/week/month or year)).

1. Describe task that exposes employees to this hazard	2. How often, on average, would an individual employee conduct this task? (list either times per week, per month, or per year, whichever best applies).	3. How many employees do you have who conduct this task?	4. Multiply the answer for #2 by the answer for #3 to get a total exposure for your employees.
Example: Exterior window-washing	*2 times per year*	*10 employees*	*20 times per year*

		Total of all #4 rows:	

Use of Technical Standard / Regulation / Guideline

What regulation or standard do you follow to protect employees from this hazard, if any?

Upper Management Support / Policy / Full Hierarchy Accountability

Is there a written policy/program on this hazard?

Who is in charge of ensuring that employees are kept safe from this hazard? A) At the senior management level. B) During day-to-day operations.

How does the agency ensure that the regulation or policy relative to this hazard is followed by all employees?

Training / Certification

What training have employees received relative to this hazard?

Is there any special license, qualification or amount of training required before an employee can conduct the tasks you listed above under question two?

CONTROLS

Controls – Personal Protective Equipment - Have

What safety equipment do you have for this hazard?
Examples include: personal fall arrest systems (e.g., safety belt and lanyard, body harness connected to anchor point), ladder attachment devices.
What condition is it in?
How often is it inspected?
Were employees trained in its use and maintenance?
Is it labeled with any “approval” designation?
How was this equipment selected?
Do you still have the manufacturer’s instructions for your fall protection equipment?
Is the equipment used in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions?

Do you have the all the correct types of fall protection equipment you need to cover all the types of worksites you have?

Do you have enough of this equipment to cover all active worksites, given that there may be multiple jobs going at the same time?

Controls – Personal Protective Equipment - Use

How is it determined when this safety equipment should be used?
By regulation or standard?
By your written policy?
By specific criteria (such as at certain heights)?
Always use for certain tasks (such as when using certain types of lifts)?
Case-by-case or field determination?
There is no method for determining when safety equipment is used.

When this safety equipment is supposed to be used, how frequently is it actually used?
Always mostly half-the-time sometimes never

Do you have the all the correct types of fall protection equipment you need to cover all the types of worksites you have?

Do you have enough of this equipment to cover all active worksites, given that there may be multiple jobs going at the same time?

Controls - Engineering

How are employees protected from floor and wall openings?

Do you have openings protected with guardrails?
What are the rail heights?
Do you know what weight load the rail can handle?
Do you have floor hole covers?
Under what circumstances/types of openings do you use permanent versus temporary guards?
Under what circumstances/types of openings do you use fixed versus moveable guards?

What signage is used to warn employees of a potential fall area? When is signage used? Are there openings for which signs are the only protection?

Are there circumstances under which safety nets are used?

How are leading edges (a point from which you could fall that moves as you are building it, such as the edge of a roof) protected during construction and renovation activities?

Emergency Response Planning

Is there a plan in place to respond to an accident or emergency with this hazard?

Concerns / Near Misses / Accidents

Is there a designated person to whom employees go with complaints or concerns about this hazard?

Is there a formal reporting procedure for near misses (narrowly avoided accidents)?

Is there a formal reporting procedure for accidents/injuries/illnesses with this hazard?

Have you had any accidents or near misses with this hazard? Please give an estimated date and brief description.

Prevention

In the “Level of Employee Exposure” section, you identified tasks that expose employees to the hazard assessed in this tool.
Can you identify any ways that would eliminate or reduce employee exposure to this hazard?
For example, can you eliminate the hazardous task?
Modify the hazardous task?
Do the task remotely?

What would be needed to implement these preventive measures?

Other / Comments / Anything You Want to Add

Are there any other specific controls to protect employees from this hazard?

Any other general comments:

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED ASSISTANCE WITH THIS DOCUMENT, CONTACT: Hilary Hackbart, Massachusetts Division of Occupational Safety, 617-969-7177, ext. 333, or hilary.hackbart@state.ma.us